



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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CONTACT: Karen Cambias 713-495-4227

Safety Message from City of Houston EMS Physician Director/Public Health Authority Dr. David E. Persse

Don't let a Trip to the ER Mar Your Holiday Festivities

In 2005 more than 152,000 children under 15 years old were treated for toy-related injuries in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. Consumers are urged to make safety a top priority this holiday season, because no one wants to make a trip to the hospital. Although the majority of toys are safe, they can become dangerous if misused or if they fall into the hands of children who are too young to play with them. Follow age recommendations when selecting toys.

Many toy-related injuries occur when parents overestimate their child's ability to handle a toy designed for an older age group. When a label says, "This toy is not appropriate for children under 3," it isn't because the manufacturer thinks the items might be too tough for a 24-month-old to figure out, but because the toy is small (or has small parts) and poses a choking hazard. Buy children accessories for safety.

Toys such as bicycles, scooters, skateboards and inline skates are safer when children wear protective gear. If you plan to give any of these toys as gifts, make them safer by also giving a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and wrist guards.

Review toy recall information which can be found at several consumer safety websites including The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website.

When selecting toys, avoid the following:

- Toys with sharp points or edges. Children may unintentionally cut themselves or another person.
- Toys that produce loud noises. Toy guns and high-volume portable cassette recorders can permanently impair a child's hearing.
 - Propelled toy darts and other projectiles. Propelled toys can cause cuts or serious eye injuries.
- Toys with strings, straps or cords longer than 7 inches. Long strings and cords could wrap around a child's neck and unintentionally strangle him or her.
- Electrical toys. Electrical toys are a potential burn hazard. Avoid toys with a heating element—batteries, electrical plugs—for children under age 8.

- Toys painted with lead paint. Exposure to lead can result in lead poisoning, causing serious damage to a child's brain, kidneys and nervous system. This information provides limited precautions about the purchase of safe toys and should not be considered all-inclusive.

HFD is a member of the Greater Houston Safe Kids Coalition and supports the coalition's mission to prevent accidental injury to children. For more safety information got to HFD website: <http://www.houstontx.gov/fire/index.html> . References: Greater Houston Safe Kids Coalition: <http://www.safekidsgreaterhouston.org/> ; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) www.cpsc.gov